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# TRAVELS IN SOUTH AMERICA

FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY FIVE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD,  
DRAWN BY E. RIOU,  
AND TEN MAPS FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR.

VOLUME II.

TUMBUYA-SARAYACU-TIERRA BLANCA-NAUTA-TARATINGA-  
SANTA MARIA DE HELEN.



[title page]

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## NAUTA TO TABATINGA.

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000 hundred men. A similar remark applies to the Mayorunas, whose territory stretches for ninety miles along the river Ucayali, and nearly two hundred miles along the Amazon, and yet their population scarcely attains to five hundred individuals.

On leaving the village of Mahucayaté we continued along the right bank, and visited, one after another, the places connected with the mission of Pevas. The page that I had devoted to them, and had calculated on filling, retained its virgin whiteness. At Pérhuaté, as at Moromoroté, I saw nothing but houses shut up, and red or black fowls foraging about in the scrub.



VILLAGE OF MOROMOROTÉ, ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE AMAZON.

133 About three miles from Moromoroté a canal, supplied with water by the river, invited us to turn from our course. After rowing for a few moments we floated with its current into a lake of black water, where also debouched, after uniting into a single stream, two little rivers coming from the interior. This lake, which bears the Spanish and Quichua names of Caballo-Cocha (Horse-lake), an etymology unexplained rather than inexplicable, is some fifteen miles in circumference, and in form an almost regular oval. Its brown surface, encircled with slopes of yellow ochre and stunted vegetation, exhibits a singular appearance when the traveller approaches it, as we did, at the hour when the day has ended and the night not yet commenced.

136 The singular abundance of fish in this lake—let it not displease the illustrious and  
797 learned Humboldt—the absolute freedom of its shores from mosquitoes, the indescribable calm and collectedness which one breathes with the very air, and which disposes the mind to reverie or prayer—all these advantages combined have given the missionaries of Pevas the idea of founding a village mission on its banks. A Franciscan monk, come from Pevas with this object in view, has collected there several families of Ticuna Indians previously catechised, and has taken up his residence in their midst. At the period of my visit this village, although it had already been established three years,

797 contained no more than eight finished houses; the others, not having got beyond the first rough sketch, presented nothing to the disappointed beholder but their rudimentary posts.

The spiritual head of Caballo-Cocha was a man of about thirty years of age, with a white skin, brown hair, and the make of a carabineer. He habitually tucked up the sleeves of his gown as far as his elbows, whilst the tail of the garment was tucked



VILLAGE OF TACHUATÉ, ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE AMAZON.

into his belt. The moment our *égarité* reached the shore he appeared on the bank, and began to question my men in a style that I thought the reverse of civil. As I slipped out of the *pamacari* to put an end to this cross-examination, the monk perceiving me, changed a little the tone of his voice, and, with a slight salute, offered me the hospitality of his roof. I accepted his offer and followed him into his dwelling, with a full understanding that my visit was far from enrapturing him. Perhaps I had interrupted his prayers, or interfered with his arrangements for the evening.

In the course of the supper to which he invited me I entertained him with an account of my stay at Pevaa, and of my journey to Santa Maria with his superior, Father Manuel Rosas. These matters, which I thought would possess some interest for him, plunged him into an icy reserve. My efforts being thus repulsed I affected an appearance of fatigue, and retired to the room which had been accorded me.

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Next morning, at daybreak, I sallied forth to examine the banks of the Caballo-Cocha. Amongst the beautiful vegetation I found two varieties of croton, a *Carolinea* with sulphur-yellow flowers, and that species of cinnamon-laurel which, on account of the citron-like scent of the leaves and the cinnamon odour of the bark, has obtained in Brazil the name of *canelon*. At this early hour the living creatures which inhabited the waters of the lake crowded to the surface to salute the dawn of light; the young fry leaped joyfully. The *surubis* opened their valve-like mouths, the *matius* exhibited their glistening rose-coloured scales, the dolphins threw water up from their snouts, the lamantins snorted loudly, and the caymans, hidden in the moist vegetation, yawned amorously at the sun, or snapped together their formidable jaws in honour of that luminary.

After sounding the lake and finding that its black waters had a depth of three fathoms, with a bottom, here of clean sand and there of mud, I returned to the mission to take leave of my host. I found him at the door of his house. The reflection which comes with night had favourably influenced the humour of this individual. He almost smiled whilst announcing that breakfast would soon be ready. I thanked him for this forethought, but announced my immediate departure.

"You will not leave without breakfast!" exclaimed he.

"I shall leave without breakfast," I answered.

The astonishment which this announcement caused him was more than a sufficient revenge for the petty annoyance he had caused me, so I added, in order to lessen the shock which my determination seemed to give:

"I have to make my way along the river, and shall not breakfast before reaching Loreto."

On fetching my mosquito-curtain from the room in which I had slept I found two little Ticuna girls in the posture of suppliants. An unhappy shout of laughter which they had been unable to repress during prayers had drawn upon them the punishment of kneeling and gazing, for twelve hours, at the corner of the wall. At the time I entered, the bigger of the two, wearied with counting the bits of straw in the plaster-wall, had closed her eyes, and, squatting down on her heels, slept peacefully. I obtained a pardon for these little girls, who flew from the room with a cry of joy like birds set at liberty.

At the mouth of the channel which connects the lake of Caballo-Cocha with the Amazon my boatmen crossed the river diagonally, in order to reach the village of Loreto, about twelve miles distant. We arrived there about eleven o'clock.

Loreto is the last Peruvian possession which the traveller finds in the eastern part of the river. It has existed thirty-three years. The land on which it is situated, half-ochre half-clay, presents a series of little rounded, juxtaposed elevations, lying in a direction from the south-east to the north-west, and resembling the swellings which are thrown up by active volcanoes. On these little hills, intersected by ravines, are situated sixteen thatched huts, sufficiently detached to prevent the inhabitants from conversing together, even at the top of their voices.

This mournful place, Peruvian by right but Brazilian in point of fact, is inhabited

000 by Portuguese merchants, who are occupied with a very restricted trade in sarsaparilla, cotton goods, and salt-fish. If there is little to divert the residents there, at all events [136] mosquitoes are very common, and the chique or *pulex penetrans* abounds; whilst the first feed on your blood, the second, like troglodytes, excavate little caverns and holes beneath the toes, where they increase and multiply, perfectly indifferent to the violent itching which you suffer from their filthy presence.

797 The Loreto factory, in which I lived some days, would not have furnished me much information concerning the original Loreto mission, except for the excursion I made in the company of a very young Portuguese with whom I temporarily shared the dwelling.



VENANCE IMPOSED ON TWO YOUNG GIRLS

The *égaritéa* which had brought me to Loreto had left for Nauta, and it was in a sort of canoe that we ascended the river as far as the Quebrada of Atacoari, where my young man had some business to transact. It was in the interior of this gorge, whence flows a river of black water, that in 1710 the Equatorian Jesuits had founded, under the patronage of Nuestra Señora de Loreto, the first mission of this name, of which [131] there no longer remain any traces. The grandchildren of the converts, Indians of the Ticuna race, now dwell in a state of nature on both banks of the Atacoari.

133 The narrow and winding entrance to the quebrada is invaded by the Amazon, whose white waters extend to the distance of a mile and a half inland. Pendant branches and vines, stretching across from one bank to the other, give the outline on the blue sky of those festoons and streamers of which the author of *Letris* speaks. At the time we ascended, the river, which had been overflowing since the evening, had already covered the banks and their bushes. Little trees, of which the trunks had disappeared, still displayed their leafy tops, and seemed to protest against the inundation.

After a zigzag progress for an hour amid the submerged vegetation, of which our

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canoe grazed the topmost branches, we passed suddenly from the white waters of the Amazon to the black waters of the Atacoari. Having reached the place where this river bifurcates, we took the left branch, and landed in a little creek, where a few houses were visible. Brazilian soldiers, of the kind who poniard their chiefs under pretext of tyranny, had taken refuge in this spot, and lived conjugally with Ticuna women who had escaped from some mission. These runaway warriors, who may be frequently met with on the canals and igarapés of the Amazon, where the sentence of a court-martial cannot reach them, have sometimes received us in a most hospitable manner, and caused us to wonder at the peaceful tableau presented by their home life. All cultivate a few yucca-roots and bananas, hunt and fish to supply their table, traffic with the river traders in sarsaparilla and chocolate, which they collect in the woods, and from this trifling commerce draw a little money with which to purchase cotton goods wherewith to clothe themselves, and ornaments to bedeck their wives. Exempt from all troubles and anxiety, without ambition or unsatisfied dreams of any kind, these philosophical deserters, under the ban of society, but received with open arms by nature, pass their days happily with the companions of their choice and the little, brown, and hairy marmots which Heaven has been pleased to send them.

The business which brought my young Portuguese to the dwelling of these planters was connected with an order for a load of sarsaparilla which he had received from the Barra do Rio Negro, and which the Atacoari merchant had promised to deliver at the end of the month. The transaction being concluded to the satisfaction of the two parties, and sealed with a dram of rum taken from a common glass, we supped and slept beneath the roof of the Brazilian soldier. The next morning, instead of descending the Amazon, we continued to ascend the course of the Atacoari.

To the square houses of the soldiers soon succeeded the round huts of the Ticunas. These natives, who, as I was informed, inhabited only the banks of the principal river, dwell also, in point of fact, on the banks of the Yacanga and Yanayaquina, two tributaries of the right and left banks respectively.

The first Ticunas we came across made a very bad impression on me. We had just started on our way. It was seven o'clock, and the sun was rising: the more elevated parts of the landscape were already brilliantly illuminated; below all was enveloped in a soft fog; the birds chattered whilst pluming their wet feathers; the flowers, vivified by the freshness of the morning, commenced to exhale their various perfumes; drops of dew trickled slowly from the leaves and fell one, by one into the river. Leaning against the side of the canoe, I was idly dreaming, hearing without understanding and gazing without seeing, when, from behind some brushwood which hid from us a bend in the river, issued, or rather shot out, a little canoe manned by two Ticunas, a man and a woman: the man rowed, the woman steered with the paddle; in the centre of their vessel, a mere nut-shell, there was visible a bunch of bananas and edible roots, half-covered with some large cane-leaves. The brilliant green of the fresh leaves, still glistening with dew, contrasted with the blue and vermillion of a tame ara squatting on them. As they were rowing towards us we were able to examine them at our leisure.

[142] The colour of these natives recalled that of old mahogany. A thick rough mane of hair covered their shoulders. The man was decorated on each cheek with tattoo-marks of a deep blue, produced with the juice of the *Pseudo-Añil indigofera*, the design of which somewhat resembled the Chinese letters on a tea-chest. He wore round his neck a necklace made of three or four rows of monkeys' teeth mounted on an osier framework; a brassart of woven cotton, ornamented with a bunch of yellow feathers and surmounted with a crest composed of the long feathers of the ara, was fastened just below the shoulder of each arm; bracelets of a similar material, but without the *pompon* or crest, encircled his legs above the ankles; and a peculiar girdle round his loins completed his attire. In his hand he carried a lance of palm-wood, with a notched point. The woman had neither the hieroglyphic marks on her face nor



CANOE OF THE TICUNA INDIANS ON THE RIVER ATACOBARI.

[301] the crested bracelets on her arm. She wore a necklace of red glass beads, acquired [439] in one of her husband's transactions with the Brazilians. A band of woven cotton [291] adorned the lower part of her legs, and a belt of the same material, none too wide, encircled her loins.

008 This little group, dimly seen in the faint light of the quebrada, and standing out in relief against the rich back-ground of vegetation, through which the blue sky was here and there visible, presented a charming subject for a sketch, of which I proceeded to take advantage. Having stopped the canoe, my companion amused the two Ticunas while I set to work to paint them. Puzzled by my occupation as much as by the intentness with which I regarded them, the couple exchanged some observations in an idiom with which I was unacquainted, and in the utterance of which they appeared to use their throat rather than their tongue. The gutturals of Hebrew, the double consonants of the Quichua tongue, the G, the Jotas and the X of the Castilian, are sounds of the softest melody compared with the vocal gurgling of these Ticunas,

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whose words I afterwards tried to express in musical notation, despairing ever to write them in syllables. 194

Like most of the river-tribes, these Ticunas understood the Tupi dialect, and spoke 191



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TYPICAL PORTRAIT OF A TICUNA INDIAN.

it a little. Our men learned, from their inquiries as to our unexpected meeting at such an hour, that the natives had visited their plantation in order to gather the banana and yucca which they were then taking home. This store, providing sustenance for a week, assured them of passing the whole of this time in idleness, swinging in a ham- 222

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222 mock. On parting we gave the man some fish-hooks and the woman a pair of scissors  
[609] which had been notched by long use. This liberality procured from the pair a torrent  
of thanks from the depths of their throats, besides a present of part of the bananas  
they had gathered.

609 We stopped successively at several Ticuna huts, where, without other payment than  
574 a trifle gracefully presented to the proprietors, we ate, drank, slept, and collected  
musical pipes, drums, necklaces, bracelets, coronets, pompons, crests, and other baubles  
representing the wealth of the country, of which a Parisian bourgeois would have envied  
us the possession to decorate the walls of his villa at Asnières or Pantin.

008 The information we obtained on our journey concerning the manners and customs  
of the Ticunas is limited to the subjoined details. If we do not preface them with  
any notice of the antecedents of these natives, it is because the thread which connects  
their present with their past is too slight to sustain a dissertation.

175 The Ticuna nation, mention of whom occurs as far back as the seventeenth century,  
[131] occupied, at the time when Pedro Teixeira ascended the river, the space on the left  
[101] bank comprised between the rivers Ambiacu and Atacoari. On the north its territory  
was bounded by the Pehua and Yahua Indians; on the east by the Yuris of the river  
Iça; and on the west by the Orejones of the river Napo. These territorial limits remain  
still the same, only the numerical strength of the Ticunas is no longer commensurate  
with the extent of country they formerly occupied. Subjugated, re-subjugated, and  
catechised in turn by the Portuguese Carmelites and the Spanish Jesuits, who based  
on the pretensions of their government a claim to the legitimate control of the Ticunas  
and disputed for possession by force of arms, these natives, already much enfeebled  
by the contrary influence of the two forces acting upon them during half a century,  
were repeatedly decimated by the small-pox, that cholera-morbus of the red-skins,  
which completed the work of the *de Propaganda Fide*. All that now remains of the  
[161] Ticuna nation forms a population of about one hundred and fifty individuals, all of  
whom live on the borders of the Atacoari and its two tributaries.<sup>1</sup>

609 A very odd custom of the Ticunas is the manner in which they receive individuals  
574 of another nation than their own. Hardly has such a visitor appeared on the threshold  
of their hut, than all the Ticunas who may be present seize their lances and present  
the point at the individual, under pretence of opposing his entrance. The visitor, who  
is aware that this is only etiquette, thrusts aside with his hand the weapons directed  
against him, enters the hut and seats himself on the nearest hammock. The majority  
352 of the Ticuna huts are provided, like the Brazilian drawing-rooms in the province of  
Para, with three or four hammocks slung opposite one another. When each hammock  
is made to swing by its occupant, either to chase the mosquitoes or to cool the air,  
and all swing together, passing, repassing, and apparently dodging, without ever  
coming into collision with each other, one might imagine oneself in a lace manufactory  
with the interminable motion of the bobbins before one's eyes.

609 The master of the hut then addresses the stranger, and in the hollow ventriloquial  
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<sup>1</sup> We speak of the Ticunas who are living wild, and not of those individuals of the same nation who have settled  
during the last twenty-five years in several of the villages on the Amazon.

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The master of the hut then addresses the stranger, and in the hollow <sup>321</sup> tones peculiar to the Ticunas, asks, "Who are you?—Where do you come from?—Are you friend or foe?—What brings you here?" The stranger satisfies these inquiries one after the other; or, more frequently, his visit having only a commercial aim, is content to answer by exhibiting the articles he brings, and which he desires to exchange for the products of Ticuna industry. The arms are then cast aside in order to discuss the value of the goods offered and those wanted; it will be readily understood that the discussion is intermingled with numerous requisitions on the caisuma. The articles of Ticuna industry consist of yucca-flour, blowing-pipes, hammocks, hunting-poison, and coarse cotton goods.

Some young girls with short-cut hair whom we had noticed among the Ticunas led us for a moment to believe that they shared the custom of cropping with the Yahuas; but the information we obtained on this subject disabused us of the notion. The cropped pate of these young girls was only the visible sign of their having attained the age of puberty, and was the complement of the mysterious practice which the tribes of the Plain of Sacramento, and notably the Conibos, call *Schébianabiqui*. The Ticunas name it *Ihiéboah*, an expression which is less humorous than the other, and which may be translated "young girl," from *ihié*, woman, and *boah*, child.

After translating the word, it remains to describe the custom itself.

When the matrons find that a female child has attained puberty, they take possession of the young girl, conduct her in a procession to a hut built in a lonely place for the purpose, shut her up in it after providing some food and a vessel of water, and then leave her for forty-eight hours, the victim of *ennui* or her reflections. At the expiration of this time the matrons come to deliver their prisoner; but before giving her complete liberty, they rub her head with the milky juice of a *Acua*, which instantaneously coagulates, and forms, under the rotatory motion of the palms of their hands, a multitude of little balls, within which is entangled the hair of the young girl. These little balls, which the matrons snatch away one by one for amusement, tear away the hair with them, and make the patient scream with pain; two musicians, with their backs to the entrance of the hut, play an accompaniment to this proceeding on the flageolet and tambourine.

When the head of the victim has been thus completely stripped, the women cover it with a hood of yellow feathers, the shape of which reminds one of a species of toadstool (*Boletus*); in the centre of this is fixed a plume of feathers from the tail of the ara. Thus accoutred, the young girl, frightened and crying, is first led round the village, and then conducted in succession to the river-side and the forest, continually followed by the matrons, who whip her roughly with green boughs in order to harden her against the trouble to come.

After several hours of wandering in this manner, and an indefinite number of draughts of caisuma which the young girl is forced to drink, they introduce her into a hut where a new hammock has been slung for the purpose. Utterly broken down with fatigue, drunkenness, and the switchings so unsparingly administered, she tumbles into the swinging net and immediately falls into a profound sleep. In the meantime, the assembled nation celebrates, with games and a remarkable consumption of fermented liquor, the *Ihiéboah* fete.

881 of fermented liquor, the *Ihichoh* fête. On this occasion dancers, with their heads  
 [535] muffled in bags representing human figures, execute a series of figures more or less successful as an attempt at chorographic art.

On awaking in the morning the young girl finds the floor of the hut strewn with ashes. Without this precaution on the part of those who have aborn and beaten her, *Mhohoh* (the devil), at the moment the soles of the girl's feet touched the ground, would not fail to possess himself of her through the new path provided by nature. This formality concludes the ceremony, and, after the customary ablutions, the girl, again free, awaits without impatience the time when, her hair having grown, she is handed  
 [582] over to a husband. As Ticuna girls are marriageable about their tenth year, and two or three years of delay are necessary that their hair may attain a certain length, it would appear that at twelve or thirteen years of age they may be brought under the yoke of Hymen, a classic phrase very applicable to their lot.

304 The male children, like those of the Jews, are circumcised a few days after birth. Female children are subjected about their fifth year, and under pretence of circumcision, to a species of mutilation the object of which is unknown to us, but which, if it had been practised in the Isle of Lesbos, in the time of Sappho, Erinna, Telesilla, Myrtis, and Anyta—other and better names I pass by—would have rendered impossible a certain dialogue of Lucian, and deprived Juvenal of the malignant pleasure of writing his satire, *Lesbides infamem*, &c.

776 At the period when the Ticunas formed a nation under the command of chiefs, instead of being, as now, merely scattered, self-dependent families, they worshipped a  
 [178] god-creator, under the name of *Tupana*;<sup>1</sup> gave thanks to, although abominating, a spirit  
 619 of evil called *Mhohoh*; and believed that the soul, after the death of the individual, would pass, according to the works during life, either into the body of an intelligent being or into that of an unclean animal. According to their ideas heaven was divided  
 772 into two spheres, the one superior the other inferior, separated by a transparent vault;  
 821 in the first the creative spirit *Tupana* was intrenched; the stars which we see from below are the rays of light from his face, weakened by passing through the intermediate vault and the inferior sphere. Their astronomers admitted the revolution of the earth around the sun, and recognized in this luminary the brother and spouse of the moon.  
 823 According to them the rivers were the arteries of the terraqueous globe; the streams the veins; and their respective currents were due to the gravitation or simple motion of the planet around the pivotal star or sun.

776 From their systems of theogony and cosmogony the Ticunas have only preserved a  
 438 profound indifference for *Tupana* and a dreadful terror of *Mhohoh*, who from the rank of a spirit of evil, which he long held among them, has now descended to the vulgar condition represented by the attribute of an evil-eye. All the ardour and intelligence of these savages appears to be turned towards a free traffic in articles of toy-ware, gimcracks, and playthings of all kinds, and cotton handkerchiefs of staring colours.

[17] <sup>1</sup> We may remark, in passing, that in the Yabua and Ticuna idioms, as in those of Onagwa and Tupinamba, of which we give specimens farther on, the spirit of good is always termed *Tupana*, whilst the name of the spirit of evil is different in each idiom.

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All that I have been able to *note*, rather than write, respecting their idiom—thick, guttural, and almost inexpressible as it is by the European glottis—is given in the subjoined table.

## TICUNA IDIOM.

|                           |               |                            |                    |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| God . . . . .             | Tupana.       | mañige (cassava) . . . . . | ticha.             |
| devil . . . . .           | uhoboh.       | banana . . . . .           | ppohhi.            |
| heaven . . . . .          | nahod.        | cotton . . . . .           | tech.              |
| sun . . . . .             | ehajeh.       | palm . . . . .             | houmich.           |
| moon . . . . .            | tahurnajeh.   | flour . . . . .            | nachacou.          |
| star . . . . .            | ehita.        | wax . . . . .              | etah.              |
| day . . . . .             | bunehi.       | pecuary . . . . .          | Sounhou.           |
| night . . . . .           | sultan.       | tiger . . . . .            | hai.               |
| morning . . . . .         | pamah.        | cayman . . . . .           | cooya.             |
| yesterday . . . . .       | ineh.         | bird . . . . .             | hueri.             |
| to-day . . . . .          | heinhua.      | butterfly . . . . .        | diori.             |
| water . . . . .           | dechieh.      | fly . . . . .              | caukta.            |
| fire . . . . .            | ejbeh.        | mosquito . . . . .         | ah.                |
| rain . . . . .            | poké.         | white . . . . .            | ccori.             |
| cold . . . . .            | deyoun.       | black . . . . .            | huahod.            |
| heat . . . . .            | ayaqué.       | red . . . . .              | dahouh.            |
| earth . . . . .           | huahin.       | green . . . . .            | dehch.             |
| stone . . . . .           | ehéké.        | blue . . . . .             | yach.              |
| sand . . . . .            | hanekeh.      | thief . . . . .            | shuinta.           |
| river . . . . .           | matejh.       | to steal . . . . .         | nauehuita.         |
| forest . . . . .          | nañejé.       | to open . . . . .          | ddea.              |
| tree . . . . .            | nañé.         | to attach . . . . .        | queyanay.          |
| wood . . . . .            | nat.          | to roast . . . . .         | nahnat.            |
| man . . . . .             | iyaté.        | to run . . . . .           | ihah.              |
| woman . . . . .           | ihid.         | to arrive . . . . .        | hintahua.          |
| child . . . . .           | boah.         | to go out . . . . .        | reinhouhou.        |
| old man . . . . .         | yuga.         | to sleep . . . . .         | peh.               |
| old woman . . . . .       | yaqué.        | to awake . . . . .         | bayanahi.          |
| young . . . . .           | yaté.         | to eat . . . . .           | totbush.           |
| dead (or death) . . . . . | tayouh.       | one . . . . .              | hueih.             |
| house . . . . .           | ih.           | two . . . . .              | tarepueh.          |
| cane . . . . .            | chuh.         | three . . . . .            | somepueh.          |
| oar . . . . .             | cuemuh.       | four . . . . .             | aguemonjih.        |
| basket . . . . .          | pechi.        | five . . . . .             | huemepueh.         |
| girdle . . . . .          | matchinchard. | six . . . . .              | naimehsempueh.     |
| bow . . . . .             | huerah.       | seven . . . . .            | naimehneatareh.    |
| blowing-tube . . . . .    | nihieh.       | eight . . . . .            | naimehneatamepueh. |
| lance . . . . .           | nané.         | nine . . . . .             | gomeapueh.         |
| poison . . . . .          | goré.         | ten . . . . .              | gomeh.             |
| fish . . . . .            | ehouai.       |                            |                    |

During our journey up the Atacoari, we were witnesses, though not of the tragedy 114 itself, which took place at some distance, at least of the results of a tragedy in which an ethnologist of the old school would have seen an incontestable proof of the existence of the warlike women of the river Nhamondaz, concerning whom travellers and savants have written much, from Orellana who first saw them in action and dubbed them *Amazons*, down to La Condamine, who, it is true, did not obtain personal experience of them, but who, on the authority of a sergeant-major of the Brazilian force, who, in his turn, obtained his knowledge of such matters from a deceased grandfather, thought

114 it his duty, as a member of the Academy, to bear public witness to the existence of this supposed race of chivalric women.

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A Ticuna Indian and his better-half started from home in a canoe in order to visit a plantation they possessed on the left bank of the Atacoari, for the purpose of procuring a supply of roots. Just as they reached the bank, a tiger, hidden among the vegetation, suddenly, and at a single bound, seized the man, who was in the forepart of



A DESCENDANT OF THE JHARONS

the canoe. Whether the brute had made an inaccurate aim or the mud interfered with her leap, it happened, however, that instead of gripping the shoulders of the savage, as her intention undoubtedly was, she simply struck him on the head with her right paw, and with her claws literally scalped the poor fellow, who rolled over, an insensible bleeding mass, to the bottom of the canoe, whilst the tiger, with her head above water, and with open mouth and blood-abet eyes, endeavoured to board the canoe. The tiger might have effected her purpose had not the woman seized her husband's lance, and plunged it with all the force of her two hands into the brute's throat, and thus spitted her like a chicken; the animal fell back into the water, struggled a little, and ultimately succumbed to impalement and asphyxia.

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Having rid herself of her enemy, instead of falling on her knees and addressing her god Tupana, with "Thanks, O my God!" she reseated herself in the hind part of

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the canoe and rowed vigorously home, and soon laid her insensible husband in a <sup>593</sup>hammock.

This heroic act had occurred some two hours only before we arrived at the Ticuna's <sup>593</sup>dwelling, whither we had gone impelled by hunger. The virago, although occupied <sup>574</sup>in providing us with bananas and other food, described the affair to our men without either gesture or emotion, indeed, just as if the matter under consideration was an occurrence of the most ordinary kind. Whilst I was making a crayon sketch of the Amazon, my host, whose acquaintance with surgery equalled that of the best surgeons, soaked his cotton handkerchief in rum, sprinkled it with salt, and wrapped it round the head of the Ticuna, who was lying in his hammock burning with fever. I have no knowledge of what followed.

On the same day I purchased of a hideous, old, black, bent, wrinkled, and withered <sup>231</sup>Ticuna woman, who was almost naked, a little tapir that she had reared, and who <sup>435</sup>whistled more shrilly than a post-boy. The price I paid was a necklace of yellow glass <sup>136</sup>beads which the old woman put round her neck with a hideous grimace of coquetry. My pachydermatous acquisition, about the size of a pig six months old, had not yet acquired its permanent coat; instead of the soot-coloured hair which characterizes the adult tapirs, the coat of this one was striped longitudinally with black, gray, and yellow; from the regularity of these stripes and the brilliancy of their colours it appeared as if the animal was clothed with a garment of striped calico.

After a few hours we became inseparable; it was a good-natured little animal, <sup>00</sup>soft, humble, and caressing, and always ready to testify its gratitude to anyone who would tickle its belly. Its only fault was that it persisted in slobbering over my boots and loosening the strings; but this, if it could be called a fault, was compensated by so many good qualities that I willingly tolerated it. This gentle travelling companion was snatched from my arms by one of the inflexible Parcae, after a month's acquaintance; when he died within sight of the lake Ega I was occupied with the toilet preparations necessary for my approaching visit to the authorities of the place, and having no time to save the animal's skin for scientific purposes, I threw him with all his decorations into the Amazon, breathing a prayer that the caymans might spare his remains.

On quitting the black waters and splendid forests of the interior the Amazon and <sup>136</sup>its banks appeared to me dull of colour and outline; but Loreto, in particular, struck me as hideous. The chiques and mosquitoes, which I there found more lively and more abundant than ever, still further increased the aversion with which this village had inspired me at first sight.

I have always suspected, with or without reason, that the nine species of mosquitoes that are met with on the Amazon, and which I will name on a future page, have made Loreto, if not the capital of their kingdom, at least the centre of their operations, and the theatre of their greatest exploits. Nowhere, in fact, has the audacity of these winged brigands appeared to me greater, their buzzing more ironical, their bite sharper, their poison more corrosive, or the wound they inflict slower in cicatrizing. The fowls, the ducks, the pigeons, the hoccas, the paxias, and the agamis, which at Loreto are the messmates of man and form his poultry-yard, would hasten to second my proposition,

136 if they still had the faculty, as in the days of La Fontaine, of expressing their ideas in words. In consequence of the incessant struggle which they are obliged to maintain against the mosquitoes, these birds have contracted habits which they would never have possessed were they free. When their roosting time comes they try to bury themselves in the ground, they roll themselves up, or flatten themselves out in such a manner as to cover up all the accessible parts of their bodies. But the mosquito, who roves around them like the roaring lion of Scriptures, ultimately finds a joint in their armour, makes his attack, and summonses his comrades to the feast. In the middle of the night a fluttering of wings, a stifled twittering, an inarticulate lamentation, disclose the misery of the poor bird transpierced by a thousand cleverly directed arrows.

In the forests the wild animals make use of strange methods to rid themselves of these vampires. The jaguar, rolled up in the brushwood, hides his nose and his eyelids between his huge paws; the peccary digs a hole, squats in it, and covers itself with dry leaves; the tapir, wallowing in the mud, leaves only the tip of his nose exposed for the purpose of breathing. As to man, he is able, as we know, to guarantee himself against the plague by inclosing himself in a net of stuff, where he pants in a temperature of 110° Fahrenheit.

One morning, seated in a *montaria*, a species of local *youyou*, manned by a pilot and two rowers, who were to conduct me to Barro do Rio Negro, I quitted Loreto with a sense of satisfaction which my host would have taken for ingratitude had he suspected its existence; three hours after our departure from the odious village, I left Peru for ever behind me, and entered Brazilian territory; to the old empire of Manco-Capac succeeded the young empire of Pedro II.

Our passage from one kingdom into the other was signalized by the occurrence of a violent storm. I should not have thought much of it at sea, as I had been quite broken in to high winds and sudden squalls; but a fresh-water tempest possessed a character of originality which mightily pleased me. With my pencil in hand I endeavoured to sketch several phases, for it would have been beyond my skill to have painted it in colours.

The heat had been increasing since ten in the morning. The material with which our *montaria* had been coated ran down its sides like treacle from a caulk. About two o'clock the sky acquired a sulphureous tint, which changed to a greenish gray, and ultimately to a brownish violet with long streaks of livid yellow. From minute to minute gusts of wind made openings in this threatening sky, through which the sun darted his red rays on to the left bank of the river, whose wall of verdure seemed immediately to break out in flames. The right bank appeared as in relief in a reddish twilight. Right before us, in the east, the water-line becoming confounded with the sky-line, seemed to extend the lines of the perspective into a shadowy infinity. At sunset, the water, perfectly calm, had the aspect of a sheet of congealing lead, on which the various currents, now invisible, now breaking forth clear as a stream of silver, crossed each other, intermingled and interlaced like the tangled threads of a skein of silk.

Two large rainbows stretched from north to south in all the glory of their prismatic colours. The still water of the river, which reflected them with beautiful distinctness,